



**\*\*\* For Immediate Release \*\*\***

**New England College Receives Combined \$550,000 Grant from NH Healthy Families and Centene Foundation**

*Partnership will increase the training and availability of mental health professionals to combat the critical shortage of these professionals throughout New Hampshire and beyond.*

**June 12, 2024**

**Henniker, N.H.** – New England College (NEC) announced that it will receive a combined \$550,000 grant from NH Healthy Families (\$50,000) and Centene Foundation (\$500,000), the philanthropic arm of Centene Corporation. This grant will fund a scholarship endowment for the College’s new cooperative Bachelor of Arts in Community Mental Health, a degree program that trains professionals to meet the growing mental health crisis throughout New Hampshire and New England. Recipients of the scholarship will be known as Centene Scholars.

“This generous grant from NH Healthy Families and Centene Foundation enables NEC to extend valuable scholarships to students who want to make a difference in people’s lives,” stated Dr. Wayne F. Lesperance Jr, President of New England College. “Our Community Mental Health program is cooperative in nature, so it gives students the opportunity to work in mental health settings while earning their degree and to meet a very real workforce need in our State.”

The Community Mental Health program combines classroom learning and two paid immersive experiences in which students “earn while they learn” by working with clients in the community to provide direct client care, help with daily activities in the community, and perhaps even lead group counseling sessions.

“NH Healthy Families and Centene know that by growing New Hampshire’s pipeline of available and credentialed mental health care workforce, we will enhance access to critical services for traditionally underserved populations and all Granite Staters,” explained Clyde White, Plan President and CEO of NH Healthy Families. “We are proud to support New England College’s new degree program in Community Mental Health that will address this pressing public health need.”

Recently, the State of New Hampshire has taken steps to increase mental health access and services, such as an increase in Medicaid provider rates and \$134 million appropriated to develop, recruit, and retain mental health professionals.

“On behalf of all Granite Staters, we thank Centene for their commitment to strengthening New Hampshire’s mental health care system through grants to New England College that will help

build the next generation of mental health professionals and build a brighter future,” said Governor Chris Sununu.



*Pictured: Representatives from New England College, NH Healthy Families/Centene Foundation, and New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu.*

Learn more about New England College’s Community Mental health program at [www.nec.edu/community-mental-health-bachelors-degree](http://www.nec.edu/community-mental-health-bachelors-degree)

### **About Centene Foundation**

The Centene Foundation (the “Foundation”), a private nonprofit focused on investing in economically challenged communities, is the philanthropic arm of Centene Corporation (“Centene”). The Foundation supports projects and initiatives strategically aligned with Centene’s mission-driven culture and enhances the work Centene is doing to remove the barriers to wellness underserved and low-income populations face. The Foundation is committed to addressing social determinants of health and improving health equity in three distinct areas of focus: healthcare access, social services and education. To learn more, visit the Centene Foundation’s website.

### **About NH Healthy Families**

NH Healthy Families™ is a health plan serving the needs of New Hampshire residents through our Ambetter™ marketplace exchange product, the state Medicaid program and Wellcare, our Medicare Advantage product. Our locally based employees and fully integrated medical, behavioral and wellness programs provide innovative health solutions to every region of the state with the express purpose of transforming the health of the communities we serve, one person at a time. NH Healthy Families is a wholly owned subsidiary of Centene Corporation, a diversified, multi-national healthcare enterprise. More information about NH Healthy Families can be found at [nhhealthyfamilies.com](http://nhhealthyfamilies.com).

### **About New England College**

Founded in 1946, New England College (NEC) was established to serve the needs of servicemen and women attending college on the GI Bill after World War II. Today, it serves over 5,000 undergraduate, graduate and online students annually on its campuses in Henniker and Manchester, New Hampshire. NEC offers more than 50 associate and bachelor’s degree programs, more than 10 master’s degree programs and a doctoral program, all delivered

by dedicated and accomplished faculty in the liberal arts tradition and with an emphasis on experiential learning. NEC is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education. For more information, visit [www.nec.edu](http://www.nec.edu).

Interviews are available by request.

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